



# Taking a systems approach to agricultural education, research and extension

Analysis of the extension role and the Practical Attachment Program of Mekelle University, Ethiopia



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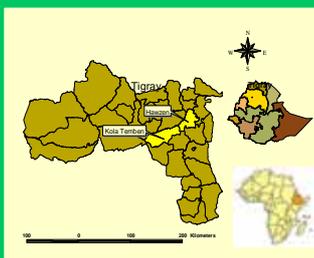
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## Introduction

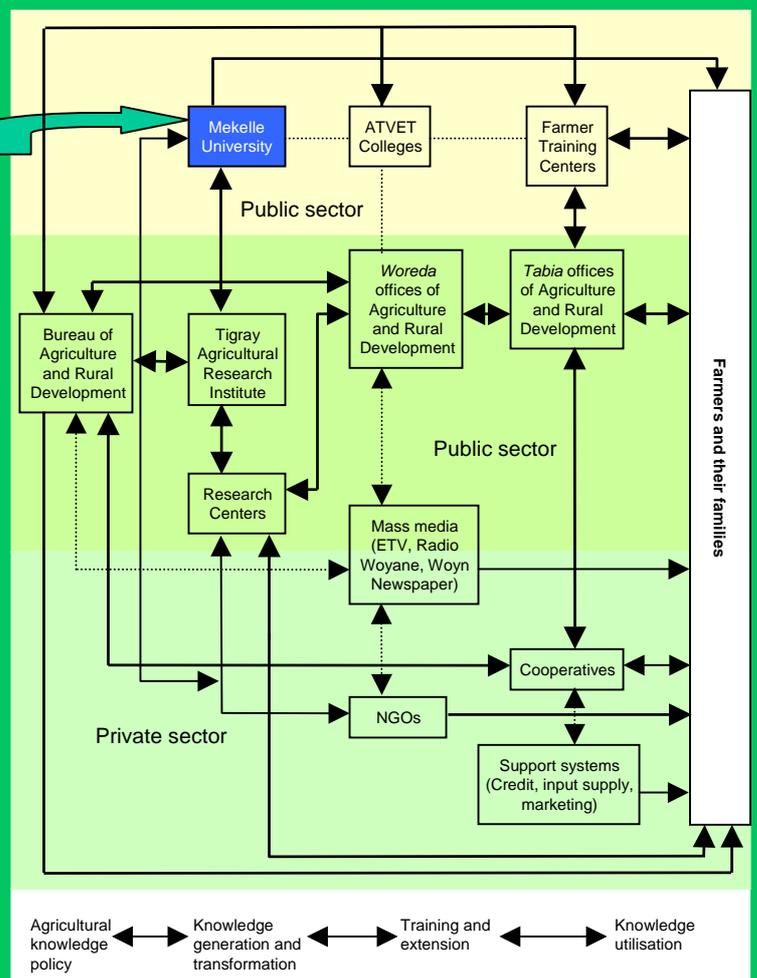
During the last decades, the Government of Ethiopia has made enormous effort to enhance the role of higher education in capacity building and development. **Objective:** to analyse the ways of organizing knowledge flows at Mekelle University from a knowledge systems perspective. **Methods:** narrative interviews, focus group discussions, personal experience and literature review.

## Mekelle University

HIGHER EDUCATION WITH PRACTICAL EMPHASIS



## The Agricultural Knowledge System in Tigray



## Results and Discussion

### Unlike research, extension is not well established in Mekelle University

Mekelle University gives significant attention to research and publication objectives but provisions for fully integrating extension within the research process are inadequate. The national extension system also does not acknowledge the extension role of higher education.

### Compared to teaching and research, extension is less rewarding

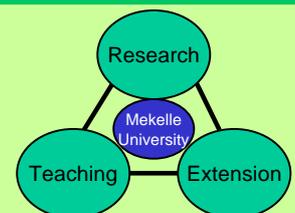
Teaching performance and scientific publications count more in staff promotion leading to inadequate attention to extension.

### The Practical Attachment Program (PAP) is a key feature of Mekelle University, but it is not well integrated into its research policies and guidelines

**Objective:** to help students gain a practical understanding of the realities of the farming community. **Benefits:** bringing university and practice closer together, creating a better qualified employment pool, offering graduates a higher possibility for entry into the job market. **Lessons:** changing attitudes, social consensus, monitoring and evaluation.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

- The development effect of the university can only be enhanced when its education, research and extension functions are integrated and developing organically.
- The adoption of policies and actions that encourage and reward the execution of research and the dissemination of its results useful to society is crucial.
- An appropriate reward and incentive system is key to developing staff research orientation and knowledge sharing culture.



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